United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1364
2 April 1993

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ United Nations spokesman confirms appointment of Thorvald Stoltenberg, Foreign Minister of Norway, to succeed Cyrus Vance as Secretary-General's Special Envoy and Co-Chairman of International Conference on former Yugoslavia.

+ Secretary-General leaves New York for three-week trip to Asia and Europe; to visit London, Phnom Penh, Bangkok, Hanoi, Rome, San Marino, Lisbon and Brussels, before returning to Headquarters.

+ Fifteen officers from Salvadoran Army, that President Cristiani had promised to remove, to be placed on leave; will retire no later than 31 December 1993, Secretary-General tells Security Council President.

+ Asian Governments adopt "Declaration of Bangkok" on human rights issues; to be submitted to Preparatory Committee for World Conference on Human Rights, from 19 to 30 April in Geneva.

+ Appointment of seven new Special Rapporteurs, as decided by Human Rights Commission.

+ Secretary-General announces establishment of Trust Fund for Commission of Experts on war crimes in former Yugoslavia.

+ Department of Humanitarian Affairs begins airlift operation of non-food relief equipment to assist disaster-stricken population in Somalia.

+ Secretary-General's Special Representative for Mozambique holds "important meetings" with President of Mozambique and President of RENAMO, separately, on implementation of Peace Agreement.

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A United Nations spokesman confirmed today that Thorvald Stoltenberg, Foreign Minister of Norway, will succeed Cyrus Vance as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy and Co-Chairman of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia. An announcement to that effect was made earlier today in Oslo.

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The Spokesman told correspondents that the Secretary-General had expressed his gratitude to Mr. Vance for the "intense efforts and great commitment" that he had brought to his function. The Secretary-General was pleased to have Mr. Stoltenberg assume this position, most likely as of 1 May.

In a related development, Fred Eckhard, the spokesman for the Co-Chairmen, said the Security Council would not take action on Bosnia and Herzegovina before next week. In the meantime, Lord Owen would go to Europe for a meeting with the European Community Council of Foreign Ministers in Luxembourg, scheduled for next Monday.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali left New York today to embark on a three-week trip to Asia and Europe, his Spokesman Joe Sills said today.

On the first leg of his trip, the Secretary-General will meet in London with Mr. Attali, the President of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. He will then travel to Phnom Penh, Bangkok and Hanoi, before returning to Rome on 14 April. After a one-day visit to San Marino on 21 April, the Secretary-General will travel to Portugal on the same day for a meeting with representatives of Portugal and Indonesia on the situation in East Timor. The Secretary-General will then go to Brussels. He is expected back at Headquarters on 26 April.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has informed the President of the Security Council that the 15 Salvadoran officers whom President Cristiani had promised to remove from the army, would be placed on leave and retire no later than 31 December 1993.

The Secretary-General told the Council President, in a letter today, that the message to that effect from President Cristiani had been brought to him by the Minister of the Presidency of El Salvador, Oscar Santamaria, on 31 March. The retirement of the 15 officers is in accordance with the Peace Accords for El Salvador concerning purification of the Armed Forces.

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Concluding an unprecedented regional meeting on human rights in Bangkok today, Asian Governments have produced the "Declaration of Bangkok", a consensus document reflecting their positions on a range of human rights issues. The 30-point declaration will be submitted to the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights, to be held in Vienna from 14 to 25 June.

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Reflecting concerns repeatedly expressed in statements to the plenary meeting, the declaration stresses the need to consider human rights in national and regional contexts and emphasizes the principles of respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. In that regard, it opposes the use of human rights as a condition for development assistance.

The declaration was drafted by representatives of 40 Governments from West Asia and the Pacific under the chairmanship of Mohammad Javad Zarif (Iran). Mr. Zarif said the Declaration was prepared in record time, reflecting the spirit of cooperation among the delegations.

The document will be considered together with the African and Latin American and the Caribbean declarations at the fourth and final Preparatory Committee meeting in Geneva, scheduled from 19 to 30 April.

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The Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, Mohamed Ennaceur (Tunisia), this morning announced the designation of seven country or thematic Special Rapporteurs, as decided by the Commission at its forty-ninth session in Geneva.

The designates are: Robert Dossou (Benin) as Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; Nigel S. Rodley (United Kingdom), as Special Rapporteur on torture; Gaspar Biro (Hungary), as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Sudan; Abdelfattah Amor (Tunisia), as Special Rapporteur charged with examining incidents and measures incompatible with the provisions of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance based on Religion or Belief; Abid Hussain (India), as Special Rapporteur on the freedom of opinion and of expression; Alejandro Artucio Rodriguez (Uruguay), as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Equatorial Guinea; and Rene Felber (Switzerland), as Special Rapporteur for the occupied Arab territories.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has announced the establishment of a Trust Fund for the Commission of Experts to investigate human rights violations in former Yugoslavia.

The purpose of the Trust Fund is to support the activities of the Commission with a view to providing conclusions on the evidence of grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and other violations of international humanitarian law committed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

The Government of Canada announced on 1 April that it was contributing $300,000 to the Trust Fund. Canada is the first State to make such a financial contribution. The Government of Norway has pledged to make a financial contribution to the Trust Fund.

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An airlift operation of 34 tons of non-food relief equipment to assist the disaster-stricken population in Somalia will arrive in Mogadishu today. The airlift, which is financed by the United Kingdom, is being carried out by the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs to support the relief activities of nine non-governmental organizations in that country.

According to a press release issued at headquarters today, the airlift was requested by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia and the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM).

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The United Nations has held "important meetings" with the President of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, and the President of Mozambique National Resistence Movement (RENAMO), Afonso Dhlakama, on the subject of the implementation of the Peace Agreement. The meetings were held by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Mozambique, Aldo Ajello, on 31 March and 1 April, respectively.

A press communiqué issued at Headquarters said both leaders had assured Mr. Ajello that peace "is an irreversible process", and that they were concerned about the delays in the fulfilment of the Peace Agreement. Mr. Ajello had stressed to President Chissano that the signing of a basic agreement between the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and the Mozambican Government was "a necessary condition" for ONUMOZ to function properly.

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